

[Translation]

Border Trade Agreement

3219. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the efforts being made by the Government to strengthen the trade ties with China, Myanmar, Pakistan and Bangladesh;

(b) the details of agreements signed and negotiations held with the concerned Governments in this regard;

(c) the details of the items imported and exported and the routes used for trading with these countries in the past; and

(d) the new areas identified for expansion of trade with these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Official trade between India and China resumed in 1978. Formal trade relations were established with the Trade Agreement signed on 15.8.84. Border Trade between India and China takes place at Shipkila Pass and the Lipulekh Pass in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh after Agreement were signed on 7.9.93 and 13.12.91 respectively.

The Trade Agreement with Myanmar was signed on 27.5.1970 while a Border Trade Agreement was concluded on 21.1.94. The Border Trade Agreement provides for trade through Moreh in Manipur and Champai in Mizoram.

India and Bangladesh signed a Trade Agreement on 4.10.80 which stands extended till 3.10.98.

There is no Trade Agreement with Pakistan.

A large number of items are exported and imported by India to China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan, details of which are given in the monthly publication of trade statistics by the DGCI & S titled "Foreign Trade Statistics of India", copies of which are available in the Library of Parliament.

The Govt. of India maintains cordial trade relations with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Delegations and Joint Business Councils exchange visits and enter into trade negotiations. Special requirements of these countries are met by India such as sugar by Pakistan. SAARC countries enjoy tariff concessions under SAPTA.

(d) The thrust areas for exports to China are soyameal, pharmaceutical and auto parts.

The thrust areas for exports to Myanmar are engineering goods including automobiles, construction material, agriproduce including spices.

The thrust areas for exports to Bangladesh and Pakistan are rice, spices, betel leaf and nut, sugar etc.

[English]

Allotment of Welfare Cess

3220. SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the allotment of welfare cess to the different subsidiaries of Coal India Limited has been stopped by the Union Government; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The welfare activities being performed by the erstwhile Coal Mines Labour Welfare Organisation are now the responsibility of the coal companies funded through their own resources.

Accumulation of Rupee Funds

3221. SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Russian Vice Prime Minister during his recent visit to India had proposed to use of the Rupee Fund accumulated in its account for reinvestment in India;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal and the area in which the funds is to be utilised;

(c) whether he has also invited Indian Banks and other business organisations to set up their branches in Russia; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). There is an in-principle understanding between India and Russia that a part of Rupee repayment funds owed by India to Russia can be used for Russian investment in joint ventures in India. However, a policy framework in this regard remains to be finalised. In his discussions in the Finance Ministry on October 29, 1996 the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Oleg Davydov, expressed Russia's interest in early progress in this area. It was agreed that detailed discussions in this regard would be held between the two sides at the next session of the India-Russia Joint Commission.

(c) and (d). The Russian Deputy Prime Minister emphasised the importance of setting up branches of Indian Banks in Russia so as to promote bilateral economic cooperation. Some Indian Banks are understood to be examining commencement of operations in Russia.